

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-12 are currently pending in this application. The Examiner is thanked for the careful examination of this application and for indicating that Claims 8-12 are allowed and that Claims 2 and 4-7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Thus, Claims 1 and 3 are the only claims currently at issue in this application.

Claims 1 and 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by International Published Application No. WO 99/25282 to *Drevik*.

*Drevik* discloses an absorbent article having a liquid-permeable surface layer 2 and a liquid-obstructing layer 3. A liquid intake layer 4 and an absorption layer 5 are positioned between the liquid-permeable layer 2 and the liquid-obstructing layer 3. An elastic thread 18 is positioned between the intake layer 4 and the absorption layer 5 (i.e., between the liquid-permeable layer 2 and the liquid-obstructing layer 3).

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly define the positioning of the string with relation to the liquid-impermeable backing. Claim 1 now defines that the central string of material extends in the rear portion of the article along the backing sheet on the side thereof distal from the absorbent body.

*Drevik* does not disclose at least this feature of the invention directed to the string being along the side of the backing sheet that is distal from the absorbent body, as presently defined by Claim 1. For example, Fig. 3 of *Drevik* shows the elastic thread 18 being positioned between the surface layer 2 and the liquid-obstructing layer 3. Also, on page 15, lines 12-16 (emphasis added) in *Drevik* it is stated that “[f]igure 3 shows the sanitary towel 1 with the elastic thread 18 arranged between the intake layer 4 and the absorption layer 5...” and that “[i]t is possible to

place the elastic thread 18 anywhere between the surface layer 2 and the reverse layer 3." *Drevik* discloses the elastic thread 18 being positioned between the surface layer 2 and the liquid-obstructing layer 3, and does not disclose a string extending along a backing sheet on a side thereof distal from an absorbent body as defined by Claim 1 in combination with the other claimed features.

It is also noted that on page three of the Official Action it was indicated that "the prior art of record fails to disclose the longitudinally extending strip of flexible material being fastened to the backing sheet on the outer, or distal, side." This subject matter is similar to the subject matter presently defined by Claim 1.

Claim 3 depends from Claim 1, and is therefore allowable for at least the reasons stated above with respect to Claim 1.

Claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form without any amendment thereto.

For at least the reasons stated above, Claims 1 and 3 are allowable. Thus, it is requested that all the rejections and objections be withdrawn, and that this application be allowed.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application, or should the Examiner feel that a teleconference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the undersigned requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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